

INNER CIRCLE INSIGHTS

Scar Tissue & Adhesions: Their Effects on the Body

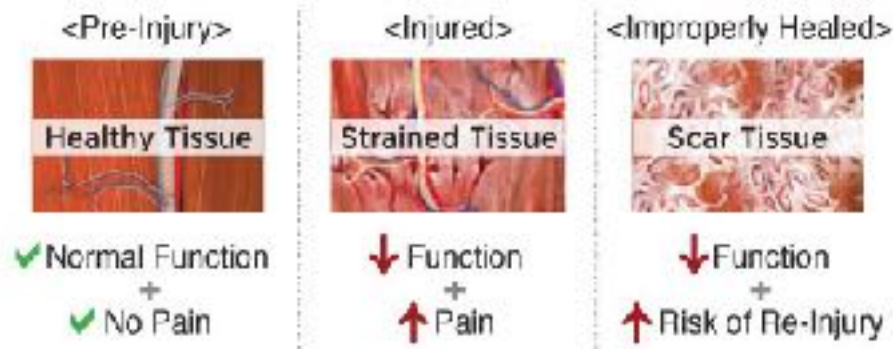
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You were involved in an injury and surgery was required. Thankfully, the surgery was a success and your surgeon was happy with your recovery and the healing of the scar. Everything was supposed to be okay, yet you still experience pain and limited mobility around the site of the scar. Additionally, new pains and dysfunctions seem to be appearing that you hadn't felt before. Why is this happening, you ask? As strange as it may sound, the "healed" scar tissue itself may be the very reason for your continued dysfunction.

Scar tissue and adhesions are fibrous collagen-based tissues that are formed as our body heals after a cut or tear. The formation of scar tissue is a natural, and necessary, step in the healing process; a way for the body to heal quickly after an injury. Due to this fact of scar tissue being the "quick mortar" of the body, it is nowhere near as mobile and fluid as normal tissue. This comes into sharper focus when scars heal as keloids; raised, thick and rubbery scars. Due to the complete integration of the human body through the myofascial system; scars, being composed of collagen, serve as anchors within the fascial web; creating myofascial restrictions that can produce a tensile strength of up to 2,000 pounds per square inch. Stressed fascia equates to decreased flexibility and crushing pressure on pain-sensitive structures.

Healthy fascia is an uninterrupted, dynamic, adaptive and fluid system; therefore, any pull (restriction) affects the body as a whole. Much like a ripple on the water starts small and eventually affects the entire lake, scars and fascial restrictions begin to propagate outwards; affecting every single system and structure of the body. Scar tissue has two phases, immature and mature. Immature scar tissue is the phase initiated immediately after the wound has healed. At this time, scar tissue is still being produced and the scars can be itchy, red, sensitive and painful. Early mobilization and massage of this tissue is of the utmost importance in reducing complications. This can help the collagen to lie down in a neat and orderly manner resulting in a smoother scar and decreased adhesions, as well as decreased long term problems. Early intervention with Myofascial Release has been found to be the most effective modality, through clinical observation; in reducing the complications of scar tissue in the short and long-term. Mismanagement of this tissue can result in joint contractures, postural misalignment and muscle atrophy due to postural changes and decreased mobility.

The mature phase is after all of the scar tissue ceases production. This usually occurs after three months, but can last up to 18 months. At this time, intervention with Myofascial Release is the most non-traumatic and effective way in which to decrease the restriction that the scar tissue has created. This is in comparison to the more traditional interventions of friction massage, static stretching and manipulation under anesthesia. The most problematic complication from the mature phase of scar tissue formation is the possibility of adhesion formation. Adhesions can be envisioned as "internal" scar tissue; fibrous bands that begin to form between tissues and organs that are not normally connected. The problem with this becomes glaringly evident, as the structure and function of these organs can begin to be affected.



Myofascial Release is a specialized form of manual therapy that consists of placing stretch and/or compression into the scar/restriction with a constant force until a release occurs, allowing a softening of the fascial system; resulting in the elongation of the body tissues and a concurrent decrease in the pressure on the pain-sensitive structures and an increased capacity for mobility. Myofascial Release performed by a skilled practitioner helps to revert the fascial system back to its healthy state: dynamic, adaptive and fluid.

Major surgeries, including C-sections, hysterectomies and mastectomies, create massive restriction throughout the fascial system and cause major disability if not addressed. These scars are commonly larger and cover more surface area of the body. Due to the location of these scars through the core and center mass of the body; the effects throughout the rest of the system can become increasingly problematic. Profound effects can be seen in pain and the loss of mobility throughout the lower extremities, hips, lumbar spine, pelvic floor, shoulder complex, upper extremities, neck and head. Smaller scars such as episiotomy, laparoscopic and arthroscopic produce similar consequences. It has been our clinical observation that the size of the scar and the time since healing can have a disproportionate effect on the level of dysfunction that occurs.

Fortunately, with proper treatment, these side effects can be avoided or lessened. The preferred treatment of these restrictions is the John F. Barnes Myofascial Release Approach; a complete evaluatory and treatment approach for restrictions found throughout the myofascial system. Our highly trained therapists assess the restrictions and use the feedback gained from both the patient and the tissue to work with the patient in releasing and softening the scar tissue. Treatment is individualized and aimed at creating permanent change in the tissue so that the patient experiences decreased pain, increased mobility and better postural alignment, allowing them to return to an overall better lifestyle. No other facility in the Bucks County region have as much training and experience with skilled manual therapy approaches, including Myofascial Release then Inner Circle Physical Therapy and Myofascial Release Centers.

Professionally Yours,

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For an appointment please call (215) 860-3623

*“The Natural Force Within Each of Us
is the Greatest Healer of Disease” – Hippocrates*

